

Shri Joachim Alva: At the same time, they go on saying that the report is coming up.

Mr. Speaker: What answer does he expect? Next question.

Heavy Engineering Corporation

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- *535. { **Shri Vishwanath Pandey**
Shri P. K. Deo;
Shrimati Savitri Nigam;
Shri Yashpal Singh;
Shri Ramachandra Ulaka;
Shri Dhuleshwar Meena;
Shri Indrajit Gupta:

Will the Minister of **Industry and Supply** be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 51 on the 29th May, 1964 and state:

(a) whether the enquiry into the fire incident at the Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi has been concluded;

(b) if so, the main findings and conclusions thereof; and

(c) whether a report of the inquiry will be laid on the Table?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Industry and Supply (Shri Bibudhendra Misra): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The enquiry disclosed that the fire started round about 4-30 A.M. on the 29th January, 1964 and was an act of sabotage. It could not be brought under control reasonably expeditiously due largely to inadequacy of personnel and fire fighting equipment. The security arrangements were inadequate and recommendations regarding fire fighting arrangements, so far as staff and upkeep of fire fighting services are concerned, had not been followed.

(c) Yes, Sir.

श्री विश्वनाथ पाण्डे : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि आग लगने से बित्तों का नुक्सान हुआ था ?

Shri Bibudhendra Misra: The loss was estimated to be Rs. 35 lakhs.

श्री विश्वनाथ पाण्डेय: यह जो इनकवायरी सैंट ग्रप हुई है, इसके पहले भी क्या किसी सरकारी कर्मचारी को इनकवायरी करने का काम दिया गया था ?

The Minister of Heavy Engineering in the Ministry of Industry and Supply (Shri T. N. Singh): An ex-Judge of a High Court, Shri B. Mukerjee, was appointed to inquire into it.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: Has the exclusive responsibility for the sabotage, and the carelessness on account of which no arrangement was made for fighting the fire been fixed? If yes, what action has been taken against those particular persons?

Shri T. N. Singh: According to Mr. Justice Mukerjee's report, it is a case of sabotage. Action is being taken against all persons who are mentioned in the report.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: Half of my question has not been answered, about fire fighting. May I know why Government has not been extraordinarily careful to make that arrangement?

Shri T. N. Singh: The defects were noticed as a result of this committee's report, and I can assure the House that appropriate action to strengthen fire fighting and security arrangements have been taken.

Mr. Speaker: I have said so many times that the Minister, before answering, should look towards me also . . .

Shri T. N. Singh: I apologise.

Mr. Speaker: . . . though in the present case I do concede that as against the lady he would not look towards me!

श्री यशपाल सिंह: क्या सरकार बतला सकती है कि इस थोड़े समय में दो बार घाग लगने का क्या कारण था। दोनों में समान कारण थे या भ्रलग भ्रलग। इसमें कोई सैबाटेज का मामला तो नहीं था ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : उन्होंने कहा है कि सैबाटेज था। रिपोर्ट आई है।

श्री यशपाल सिंह : दो दफे घाग लगने का क्या कारण था ?

श्री श्री० ना० सिंह : पहली घाग के बारे में जो एन्क्वायरी हुई है उसके मुताबिक यह पता चला है कि उसमें सैबाटेज था। दूसरी के बारे में अभी एन्क्वायरी चल रही है। अभी थोड़े दिन ही हुए जब वह हुआ था। इस घाग के बारे में इतनी जल्दी कुछ कहना कठिन है।

Shri Ramachandra Ulaka: May I know the number of persons who actually died in the accident, and the nature and extent of the assistance provided to the families of the persons who died?

Shri T. N. Singh: This is a question of a fire. Nobody died in the fire.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Is it a fact that this ex-Judge carried out the enquiry handicapped by the fact that he was not invested with the power of compelling the attendance of witnesses or taking evidence on oath, and if that is so, may I know what steps Government propose to take now to identify the miscreants who were responsible for this sabotage?

Shri T. N. Singh: The enquiring Judge has mentioned no such handicapped from which he suffered. He seems to have got all the co-operation that was required.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: The second part of my question is what steps will be taken to identify the miscreants.

Mr. Speaker: He said he was handicapped because he had not the powers to summon witnesses. The Minister says he had all those powers.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Did Government invest him with those powers?

Shri T. N. Singh: He has not been handicapped in getting the evidence of anybody from whom he wanted it.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: I want a straight answer. Had he the powers?

Shri T. N. Singh: They were all willingly available for conducting the enquiry. There is no question of anybody backing out.

Mr. Speaker: The question is whether in the enquiry that was entrusted to the Judge, he was empowered to summon witnesses and take evidence, and whether he did record any evidence.

Shri T. N. Singh: About this detail, I will have to find out.

श्री रामसेवक दाबब : भ्रमं: मंत्री जी ने बतलाया कि घाग का कारण सैबाटेज था। यह भी बतलाया कि कुछ लोगों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की जा रही है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि वह कितने लोग हैं, और क्या इस सैबाटेज में कुछ बाहरी लोगों का भी हाथ था। यदि हाँ, तो वे किस तरह के लोग थे ?

Shri T. N. Singh: I am laying the report on the Table of the House, and all the details would be available to the House.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: We would like to know as to what steps permanently have been taken to streamline security arrangements in all the public sector undertakings as a result of the disclosures and findings of this investigation.

Shri T. N. Singh: There has been a suggestion of having one unified Central security agency—that proposal is under examination—for various public sector projects, not only projects that come under this Ministry.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: We would like to know what has been done. We know the suggestion that has been made.

Mr. Speaker: That is under consideration.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: The report mentions about inadequacy of the fire fighting personnel and the equipment and the negligence of the security officers. May I know what arrangements were made and why after making arrangements, the second fire took place?

Shri T. N. Singh: Fires can happen even when the best of arrangements are made, but in this case, I may explain the circumstances. The custody room in which this occurred was closed. It was discovered as soon as smoke came out, and within 25 minutes, the fire was brought under control. Therefore, the arrangements in regard to fire-fighting etc. were good, so far as I can see.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: Is that the answer to my question? The report says about the inadequacy of the fire-fighting personnel and the equipment and the negligence on the part of the security officers. I wanted to know whether action was taken on this report and if so how it is that a second fire took place.

Shri T. N. Singh: I have already stated that action is being taken on the recommendations of the report to strengthen fire-fighting arrangements and the result was that the second fire was brought quickly under control; I have also said that it is very difficult to say that no fire at all will occur even with the best of precautions.

Shri A. P. Sharma: What specific action has been taken against those persons who have been after enquiry

found responsible for acts of sabotage and making insufficient security arrangements?

Shri T. N. Singh: This report was received by us about a month and a half ago; we have taken action against all the individuals and persons mentioned in this case. (Interruptions) Let me finish my answer. It is not possible to detail all these cases; hon. Members will find that in the report. In certain cases action has been suggested to the authorities that they either remove or punish the person concerned according to the various grades of their offences. In certain cases the officers concerned are no longer in service.

Shri A. P. Sharma: But they have been promoted.

Shri T. N. Singh: Wherever they are in service the authorities concerned there have been informed of the remarks and observations of this committee.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: Have they been promoted?

Shri T. N. Singh: In one case, one of the officers concerned left Ranchi after this incident and he was posted to another position. He has got a higher salary. That is a fact.

Shri P. E. Patel: If sabotage was the cause of the labour trouble, what action has been taken to stop labour trouble in the public sector?

Shri T. N. Singh: It is true that certain differences there between the labour leaders and the others may have had its contributory influence but it is very difficult to pin-point the exact persons. . . . (Interruptions.)

Shri Nath Pai: Be more precise.

Shri T. N. Singh: If there is disturbance like this, I lose the thread. I should be permitted to have my say. I forgot the question.

Shri P. E. Patel: I wanted to know the steps taken to stop labour trouble.

Shri T. N. Singh: During the last 1½ months we have been taking special care to understand the problems and remove any of their grievances wherever we have noticed them. The problem there is that the labour union is split up into three parties. (Interruptions.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Fire is there but the extinguishing apparatus is inadequate. I cannot keep order. . . (Interruptions) I am talking of this atmosphere.

Shri T. N. Singh: There are three factions in the labour union there. Not only that. One of the factions has gone to the High Court and got a writ suspending the operation of the other. This is our problem. Without an organised labour union functioning in full force, obviously there are difficulties.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know if the attention of the Government has been drawn to the following press report which says as follows:

"The judicial probe is also understood to have made severe comments on the conduct of certain trade unionists as also the inclusion of State power politics in the trade union field. It also sharply pin-pointed the existence of factional forces and intrigues at the executive level in the HEC set-up."

If so, may I know what the Government have to say in the face of this statement?

Shri T. N. Singh: Obviously the reference is to whatever has already been stated in the judge's report. All action that we can possibly take is being taken. I can assure the hon. Member of that. But in regard to certain things which are of a long-duration nature, long-term action is to be taken and that will produce results only after a time. Some immediate action such as taking disciplinary action against individuals, etc. is being taken.

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: May I know . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I have called the next question. The lady should not enter into the fire!

Bokaro Steel Project

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*536. { **Shri Ramachandra Ulaka:**
 { **Shri Dhuleshwar Meena:**

Will the Minister of Steel and Mines be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 898 on the 3rd April, 1964 and state:

(a) the stage at which the negotiations with Dastur and Co. about the consultancy fee and the scope of consultation about the Bokaro Steel Project stand at present;

(b) whether the terms and conditions of the consultancy agreement have been finalised; and

(c) if so, the precise nature of the agreement?

The Minister of Steel and Mines (Shri Sanjiva Reddy): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

In reply to Starred Question No. 898 on the 3rd April, 1964, the former Minister of Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering had stated that the terms and conditions of the consultancy agreement were in final stages of negotiation with Dastur and Company and that they were expected to be finalised very shortly. In reply to one of the supplementaries, the Minister had stated that an estimate of the total amount of fees to be paid to Messrs Dastur and Company for the work, had been made, but it was under negotiation, and that as soon as negotiations were over and the agreement finalised, he would be able to give the information. This assurance was given by my predecessor in the light of the then existing circumstances.